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1818-

In Inaugural Dissertation on the
Colchicum autumnale

With an experimental account in order to
prove the similarity between it and Liliac
Medicinale du Hupson.

Submitted to the examination of the
Provost, Vice Provost, Trustees and Medical
Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania.

1814

John G. Clark of New Jersey

Honorary Member of Philadelphia
Medical Society.

For the Degree of Doctor of Medicine.

"We ought in every instance, to submit
our reasoning to the test of experiment,
and never to search for truth but
by the natural road of experiment
and observation."

Lavoisier.

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Gentlemen,

It is with the greatest diffidence that I now offer for you, My Inaugural Dissertation on the Colchicum autumnale.

It cannot be expected that a person should communicate many original ideas who has been but three years in the study, the time of which is a little more than sufficient to acquire the elementary principles of so extensive a science as that of Physic. Persons who have spent the longest life in the most laborious study and collecting not only all the facts possible from their own experience and observations, but also from an infinite number of volumes, written by men of the most profound learning, professional, and of great abilities, have not been sufficed to establish a theory free from objections. Although the subject which I have chosen has not as yet appeared to engage the attention of Physicians, and I hope that its being the product of a juvenile mind will atone for its imperfections.

I ^{seriously} confess I feel a strong desire to direct the attention of Physicians to the subject, with the hope that the Colchicum may be tried more extensively as a remedy in the treatment of diseases.

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Little has hitherto been done in this respect except by
Steak, Collin, and Plenk who celebrated its virtues
in Hydriothorax and other diseases.

A wide extended
field still remains open, which promises no
contemptible harvest to the diligent cultivator. It
may be confidently expected of every agent which
acts powerfully on the living system that when we
attain a sufficient knowledge of its properties to
enable us to apply it with proper discrimination and
to temper its operations judiciously, that it will
prove eminently beneficial as a medicine. The whole
catalogue of our active remedies is illustrative of the
position; and hence in the language of the old
schools, "All Medicines in large doses are poisons,
and all poisons in small doses are the best medicines."
However repugnant this opinion may have been
to the feeling of Physicians, it was familiar to the
penetrating eye of the Philosophic Shakespeare,
who makes Jean Lawrence in his soliloquy exclaim
"Within the infant rind of this small flower
Poisons hath residence, and medicine a power,
For this being small, with that sense cheere apart,
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart."
No substance with which I am acquainted holds

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out a fairer prospect of being usefull than this
 bolchicum. Although I feel deeply sensible of
 my inability to write an essay free from imperfections
 yet I consider one purpose for which a Thesis is
 intended, to shew the extent of a candidates reading
 and observation, and I hope to be excused for any
 imperfections which it may contain. Recollecting
 the words of an Ancient Author who says, "we
 should set a double value on our present knowledge
 though it be imperfect and restrain the rude hands
 that are ever ready to pluck up the tender plants
 of science, because they do not bear fruit at a season
 when they can only be putting forth their blossoms
 impressed with the generosity of those ideas. I submit
 my essay to the candid investigations of the Philosopher
 whose patronage stamps the merit of every youthfull
 gives activity to the mind and eases to future
 investigations.

I shall proceed in the first place
 to treat of the History, Properties, & Preparations,
 secondly, and lastly, of its effects in the cure of
 diseases.

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Botanical History

Colchicum. Meadow Saffron.

Class Hexandria, Order Trigenia, Flower inferior, calyx a spathe - corolla 6 parted with its tube springing from the root. Capsule scelled the cells connected inflated. Of this genus there are but 4 species yet recognized by Botanists viz 1st *Autumnale*; 2^d *Montanum* of Spain & Switzerland; 3^d *Variegatum* - Isle of Chios; 4th *Byzanticum* - the Levant. All of these species are perennial.

The first of these species viz; the *Autumnale* will be the subject of this Dissertation.

Colchicum Autumnale

The root is a perennial, consisting of a solid double succulent bulb, covered with a brown membranous coat; the flower is large of a purplish colour, and rises immediately from the leaves resembling somewhat the common saffron. Darius the celebrated poet has elegantly described it in the following words viz; "Three blushing maids, the intrepid Myioph attend,

And vie gay youths, the enamoured train depend.
So shines with silver guards, the Georgian star.

hence its name Naked Lady

Reverend Mr. [illegible]

[illegible]

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The leaves on right blue arch his glistering can.
 Hangs on the billowy clouds his sacred form
 Under through the mist and lance in the storm
 The leaves appear in the spring and are numerous
 radical when shaded two or three leaves much nar-
 rower than the others there is no calyx the corolla
 monobolous and divided into six lance shaped seg-
 mented segments of a pale purple colour: there are
 six white lobes, filaments something shorter
 than the corolla and are furnished with erect
 pointed yellow anthers. The germen is lodged
 at the foot from which issue three slender styles
 at first at the top and terminating by distinct down
 bed stigmas. The capsule is three lobed, divided
 into three cells containing numerous small glob-
 ular seeds which do not ripen until the succum
 dries when the capsule rises above the ground upon
 a strong peduncle. It is a native of the temperate
 parts of Europe generally growing in wet meadows.
 It is likewise cultivated at the Botanical garden
 of Mr. Parker situated one mile from Philadelphia.
 It flowers in September at which time the
 old bulb decays, and a new bulb begins to be formed.
 In the following May the new bulb is perfected, and
 the old one is withered & corrugated.





2. *Admission* 1871



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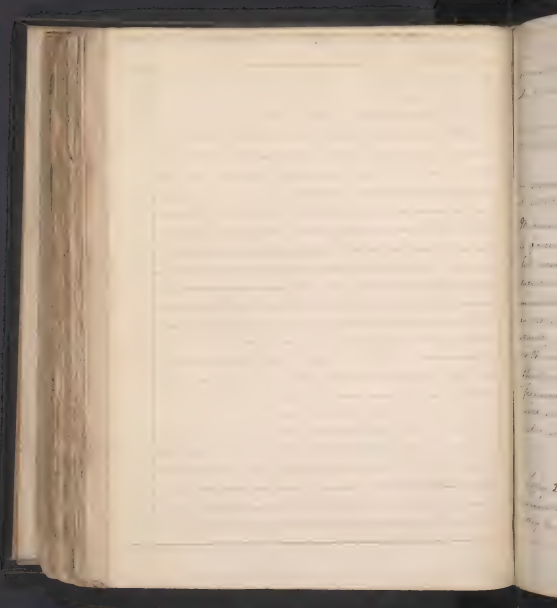
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for the oil and coal I am using.

Experiment 5.

City at 10.15. The clock tells the time also
the wind is N - very low blowing through
the Savannah water in the place venting
the smoke from the chimneys.
In the morning at about 7.30 the sea was

$\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$

[illegible]





... of a discharge
of a hundred pieces, and in less than
minutes a second discharge of four
... and more material than the first
... as the same material

Experiment 2^d

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... in ... strokes in a minute perfectly
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in one hundred and fifty minutes a slight
 perspiration broke out on his forehead and
 gradually extended over the whole surface of
 his body and in two hundred minutes he
 had a copious discharge of watery urine
 and twenty minutes
 his pulse became natural.

Experiment 8th

August 2th at 3 o'clock P.M. the patient
 Mr. J. G. took two hundred drops of
 Le Cam's Medicated oil of Turpentine and in
 one hour one shiver was felt in the
 back and volume still natural -
 In 5 minutes it beat 60 strokes per minute.

10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

His pulse became dimin-
 ished as in the preceding experiments: in
 one hundred and eighty minutes he discharg-
 ed a large quantity of pale coloured urine



placed in a column marching at regular
 intervals in the same manner as the soldiers
 of the army. The march was
 rapid and in two hundred and twenty
 minutes the birds rose to its natural
 standard.

I give the detail of the movement
 of the birds as it was seen in the
 hands of some and an extension on
 your patience. I trust enough has been said
 already to prove that the *Colaptes auratus*
 is the chief of the family.

I shall proceed
 in the next place to speak of the efficacy
 of the *Colaptes auratus* in the
 case of root and also mention a few
 cases in which it has succeeded in erad-
 icating that pernicious and pestiferous
 disease which has so long been the scourge
 of the human race.

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the morning, but a large quantity of
 rejected colored matter, and at the time
 he experienced much gastric distress and pain
 considerable. The disease having in a great
 measure subsided; sometimes completely disappear-
 ed as though it had been touched by the wand
 of a Magician. Sometimes he found it neces-
 sary to repeat the dose, and in 36 or 43 hours
 his Patients were able to follow their usual
 occupation without the least symptoms of
 the disease.

In the hands of Doctors Thirick
 and Parish it seems to have been no less
 successful.

(7) its effects in Calculi

Q. very: What would be the effects of Colicium
 in Calculous affections? seeing the great analogy
 that subsists between the calculous disease and
 the Gout; and knowing that Gouty Patients
 are very likely to be afflicted with calculous
 affections in advanced life.

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Of its effects in Dropsy.

From the Diuretic and Cathartic properties of the *Sine: bolchii*, it would seem a pison, a medicine extremely well adapted to many cases of dropsy; from the above supposition I was induced to make trial of it in the following case.

September 15th 1817 M.A.

(Blackwoman) Aged thirty two years, consulted me for ascites, and anasarca of the lower extremities. I gave her two hundred drops of the *Sine: bolchii* in the morning which produced a very copious discharge of urine and watery faeces; pleased with the success of this operation of the medicine, I was led to continue the use of the medicine for nine days in which time her dropsical swelling had completely disappeared and nothing was then left for me to do but to prescribe a little *Sine: medi-* cine to restore the tone of the system; and in the space of nineteen days from my first seeing her, I had the satisfaction of seeing her completely restored to her usual state of health.

Before I close these

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few and crude remarks which is not the
 work of choice but necessity, permit me
 Gentlemen, to return you my greatfull thanks
 for your polite attention, and the opportunity
 which you have afforded me in acquiring knowl-
 edge from your Medical lectures whilst
 a Student of this University. But for Doctor
 Gorney in particular I feel other regards than
 those which are due him merely as a public
 Teacher. His attention and instructions
 given to me whilst his private pupil will
 ever command my most gratefull recollec-
 tion of him. That you the Professor of the
 University of Pennsylvania may long live
 to continue to afford instruction to others, to
 relieve the unfortunate and receive the re-
 wards you so justly deserve is my sincere
 wish.

J. 4. 6